2/3/72

Dear Harold,

I have been thinking about what you suggest re Nixon's budget message. Before you wrote I had clipped this from the Times (plus earlier State of Union) and immediately filed it in my Military file. Does that tell you anything about my interpretation of the significance of the message?

Now, I haven8t read the whole message. My primary interest was the great rise in defense costs at a time when we are supposed to be disengaging from a war, negotiating arms limitations, and claiming that we must limit our responsibility in the defense of other nations. At about same time Nixon asked for 6 bil. increase in defense, Laird asked Senate for 254 mil. more for current defense budget, for new subs for nucleaf war.

For one thing, the massage adds to the proof that we have no serious intentions about arms limitations or demilitarization of the society/economy so dependent now on the military. Exactly what it "signals," as you say, is not clear to me. One thing which comes to mind and which can't be put past Nixon, is the anticipation of large military activity involving U.S., possibly in Vietnam. I tend to doubt this for '72 because of the election.

The Nixon "peace" move is another fake, again totally unacceptable to the other side, demanding their total surrender, and, if that is not enough to thwart serious negotiations, we have bombed NVN every day since Nixon made his speach, including yesterday with the largest amount of raids in one day since 1968. Not to mention the horror at the end of 1971. There appeared in the campus paper a really good analysis of the Nixon plan, a copy of which is enclosed for you.

Your letter tells me that you see a very specific signal in the budget message, and I think I've missed it. Don't tell me straight off, but please--some mofe hints to direct my thinking.

Best,

Howard